May 9, 2000

Dear SeaWinds on QuikSCAT Investigator:

The QuikSCAT Project at JPL is producing consistently processed QuikSCAT Operational Standard Data Products for use by Earth science researchers and other interested parties. These enhanced and uniformly processed global radar backscatter and ocean vector wind data products cover measurements from 19 July 1999 UT18:39 (QuikSCAT rev 430) to the present. Operational Standard Data Products will continue to be routinely generated with newly acquired measurements, assuring a continuous and consistent data set for scientific analyses.

The Operational Standard Data Products feature several refinements based on calibration/validation analyses and initial scientific evaluations of the Interim QuikSCAT data sets. The Operational Standard Level 2A product includes 13.4 GHz brightness temperature estimates derived from the QuikSCAT measurements. Swath vector wind data (the Operational Standard Level 2B product) have been calculated using a refined model function based in part on QuikSCAT backscatter measurements, and which addresses some of the systematic errors in the Interim data product. The Operational Standard Level 2B data also include wind velocity estimates from an alternate ("DIRTH") retrieval algorithm. A rain flag based in part on QuikSCAT Ku-band brightness temperatures is provided for each wind vector cell in the Operational Standard Level 2B product. Overviews of the rain flagging, DIRTH wind retrieval algorithm, and initial vector wind accuracy assessment information is provided in the attachment to this letter. Additional documentation is available from the PO.DAAC web site at http://podaac.jpl.nasa.gov/quikscat/.

Standard products are being produced both for newly acquired data (starting with QuikSCAT rev 4299, 17 April 2000 UT 06:43) and for historical data by reprocessing. The reprocessed data begin with QuikSCAT rev 430. Products are being produced in time order (i.e., earlier revs are being reprocessed before later historical revs). It is expected that reprocessing will be completed for the full data set by mid-July, 2000.

As Science Team members and QuikSCAT investigators, you are expected to help quantify the accuracy of the Operational Standard Data Products, isolate systematic problems, and propose refinements to the processing. The Interim data products previously produced should no longer be used as the basis for scientific investigations and publications. The Scatterometer Project solicits your inputs during the next few months, and encourages your participation in Science Team workshops over the next year.

Sincerely,

Moshe Pniel
Scatterometer Projects Manager